

**Exodus 22**  
**November 9, 2014**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: Do any of you work for a company that conducted mandatory orientation meetings for new employees?

Q: What's the purpose of an orientation meeting? [Need to learn company rules so that you can function well together as a community of people who share company goals]

Q: For those who've been in an orientation meeting, give me a couple of examples of rules or expectations you learned. [Let people demonstrate the variety of topics.]

**Transition:** God is conducting a mandatory in-depth orientation meeting as a follow-up to the Ten Commandments. If you will recall in Chp 19:3-6, God made it clear to His children that He delivered them from Egypt and carried them on eagles' wings and brought them to Himself. Moreover, they would be His treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. Of course, at that time, they didn't totally understand what all was entailed with being a holy priesthood. But now they have the Ten Commandments, and last week we began studying God's laws that expound on some of these commandments. These extra laws are commonly called the Book of the Covenant, which are chapters 21-23.

Today we will look at Chapter 22, and I want you to pretend you are an Israelite who is attending an extended Orientation Meeting so that you can learn the expectations and rules of the royal priesthood to fit well and function well as a holy nation. I invite you to notice God's VALUES or PRINCIPLES behind the ordinances He presents to the Israelites. These same values and principles are valid today, so let's pay attention to how we make God proud by being a holy people set apart for Him. Let's begin.

**BOOK (NIV 1984): [Read Ex 22:1-6]**

Observations/Process Qs-

V.1:

- If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he must pay back five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.

V.2:

- "If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed;

V.3:

- but if it happens after sunrise, he is guilty of bloodshed.
- "A thief must certainly make **restitution**, but if he has nothing, he **must be sold to pay for his theft**.

V.4:

- "If the stolen animal is found alive in his possession—whether ox or donkey or sheep—he must pay back double.

V.5:

- “If a man grazes his livestock in a field or vineyard and lets them stray and they graze in another man’s field, he must make restitution from the best of his own field or vineyard.

V.6:

- “If a fire breaks out and spreads into thornbushes so that it burns shocks of grain or standing grain or the whole field, the one who started the fire must make restitution.

### **Observations/Process Questions:**

- Q: Let’s look at v.1, which expounds on “Do not steal.” What principles do you see God implementing in this rule? [1. His restitution basically takes away any profit that the thief would have pocketed. 2. Restitution is “in kind.”]
- Q: V.2, 3 – What do you think is behind changing killing a burglar after sunrise to murder, i.e. guilty of bloodshed? [Apparently the day thief could be seen and help could more easily be obtained.]
- Q: V.3 – Notice that restitution was mandated, and if the thief didn’t have the material means to make restitution, he “must be sold to pay for his theft.” Fast forward to 2014, what do we do with thieves who are repeat offenders? [We throw them in prison]
- Q: How many thieves today could really make restitution? [Very few.]
- Andreas Havinga (posted June 4, 2001 on Christianity Today website) noted: Prison chaplains from 30 countries have expressed "alarm at the continuing growth in prison populations in many European countries." According to United Kingdom Home Office figures reported in May, Portugal has the highest imprisonment rate within the European Union, jailing 142 people for each 100,000 inhabitants, followed by England and Wales which imprison 125 inmates for every 100,000 inhabitants. The European Union average is 87 prisoners per 100,000. In other regions the rate of imprisonment is much higher—in Russia 729 per 100,000, and in the United States 682 per 100,000.
- Q: What values do you see God expressing in the rules we’ve looked at so far? [Fairness; make a person whole]

### **[Read Ex 22:7-15]**

**Background:** In the ancient Near East there were no banks, so personal property was sometimes given to a **neighbor** for protection. The one who received someone’s valuables (**goods**, clothing, or animals) **for safekeeping** was responsible for them.

V.7:

- “If a man gives his neighbor silver or goods for safekeeping and they are stolen from the neighbor’s house, the thief, if he is caught, must pay back double.

V.8:

- But if the thief is not found, the owner of the house must appear before the judges to determine whether he has laid his hands on the other man’s property.

V.9:

- In all cases of illegal possession of an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a garment, or any other lost property about which somebody says, ‘This is mine,’ both parties are to bring their cases before the judges. The one whom the judges declare guilty must pay back double to his neighbor.

V.10:

- “If a man gives a donkey, an ox, a sheep or any other animal to his neighbor for safekeeping and it dies or is injured or is taken away while no one is looking,

V.11:

- the issue between them will be settled by the taking of an oath before the LORD that the neighbor did not lay hands on the other person's property. The owner is to accept this, and no restitution is required.

V.12:

- But if the animal was stolen from the neighbor, he must make restitution to the owner.

V.13:

- If it was torn to pieces by a wild animal, he shall bring in the remains as evidence and he will not be required to pay for the torn animal.

V.14:

- "If a man borrows an animal from his neighbor and it is injured or dies while the owner is not present, he must make restitution.

V.15:

- But if the owner is with the animal, the borrower will not have to pay. If the animal was hired, the money paid for the hire covers the loss.

### **Observations/Process Questions:**

- Q: V.7, 8 – Who is ultimately responsible for missing goods or property if a thief cannot be found? [The owner]
- Q: V.8 – What process does the owner have to go through to be cleared of wrongdoing? [He has to go before the judges to prove his innocence.]
- Q: V.9-15 – These verses refer to entrusting animals with a neighbor for safekeeping. Based on what we just read, do you think the rules seem fair and reasonable?
- Q: Who has to show the most trust when an animal died, or was injured, or taken away while no one is looking? [The owner who incurred the loss. Because an oath was to be taken before the Lord, integrity was assumed to present.]
- Observation: V.14-15 – Notice the burden on the borrower of an animal it is injured or dies without the owner presence. The borrower is not culpable if the owner is present.

### **[Read Ex 22:16-31]**

V.16:

- "If a man seduces a virgin who is not pledged to be married and sleeps with her, he must pay the bride-price, and she shall be his wife.

V.17:

- If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must still pay the bride-price for virgins.

V.18:

- "Do not allow a sorceress to live."

V.19:

- "Anyone who has sexual relations with an animal must be put to death.

V.20:

- "Whoever sacrifices to any god other than the LORD must be destroyed.

### **Fundamental Responsibilities to the Underprivileged in the Israelite society**

V.21:

- “Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him, for you were aliens in Egypt.
- V.22:
- “Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan.
- V.23:
- If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry.
- V.24:
- My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless.
- V.25:
- “If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not be like a moneylender; charge him no interest. [God was teaching His people not to profit from the hardship of their brothers and sisters.]
- V.26:
- If you take your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge, return it to him by sunset,
- V.27:
- because his cloak is the only covering he has for his body. What else will he sleep in? When he cries out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.
- V.28:
- “Do not blaspheme God or curse the ruler of your people.
- V.29:
- “Do not hold back offerings from your granaries or your vats. You must give me the firstborn of your sons. [There was never any excuse for delaying their offerings.]
- V.30:
- Do the same with your cattle and your sheep. Let them stay with their mothers for seven days, but give them to me on the eighth day.
- V.31:
- **“You are to be my holy people.** So do not eat the meat of an animal torn by wild beasts; throw it to the dogs.

### Observations/Process Questions:

- Q: V.16, 17 – Who did the virgin belong to? [She was considered the property of her Father.
- Q: Since the virgin daughter was an asset to the Father, how was the father made whole when his virgin daughter was seduced? [The seducer paid the bride-price, or dowry, to the father, whether he got to marry his daughter or not!]
- Observation V.18-20 – At first glance, these three offenses punishable by death seem to be unrelated. But **they are each aimed at keeping the worship of Yahweh pure.**
- V.18 – Sorcery was a common practice in the ancient Near East. Although this specific command was aimed at the “sorceress,” the OT also speaks of sorcerers. It would appear that this particular prohibition was aimed at any form of sorcery and thus did not actually exempt men. According to one commentary, the reason that “sorceress” was used was because females were more addicted to sorcery than the men.
- Q: So how did sorcery interfere with worship Yahweh? [Sorcery honored the devil and invited the demonic into the Israelite community. God was not willing to expose the

Israelite community to such wicked influences who would try to harm His children. Thus they were put to death.]

- Background V.19: Bestiality, or sexual intercourse with an animal, went beyond just the common notion of perversion we consider this to be. This practice appears to have been used as a form of magical worship in several nations of the ancient world. Thus this command was aimed not only at sexual perversion, but at false worship. Any such practice was punishable by death.
- V.20 – Any form of open worship to any god other than Yahweh was punishable by death.
- Q: V.21-27 – Who are the underprivileged whom God is addressing in these verses? [Alien, widow, orphan, the needy in their community, neighbor]
- Q: What attribute of God is being expressed in His laws to help the underprivileged? [Compassion – Point of interest: other ancient law codes showed similar concerns for the underprivileged, but what was unique for Israel is that these laws expressed the compassion of God who cared for such people.]

### **LOOK:**

Q: What is our takeaway after going through numerous rules in the Book of the Covenant?

A: V.31 gives us a clue – we are to be His holy people. [X-Ref 19:3-6]

### **Close in Prayer**

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Ex 22:1–31). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

### **III. Protecting Personal Property (22:1–15)**

Here Moses dealt with several kinds of thievery, and he stated once again that the thief must make compensation to those who are wronged. But note that God holds sacred even the life of a thief who is breaking into a house! If he breaks in at night and is slain, the slayer is not charged. But if his crime is in the daytime, when the owner could call for help or even recognize the intruder and accuse him later, then the slayer is guilty of homicide.

Moses also deals with property damage caused by animals who eat in a field other than their master's (v. 5) or by uncontrolled fire (v. 6), and with loss of property entrusted to others (vv. 7–15). From these specific instances, the judges could derive principles that would help them decide cases that Moses did not explain in detail.

### **IV. Respecting Humanity (22:16–31)**

This series of miscellaneous laws reveals God's concern for humanity and His desire that people not be exploited. This includes virgins (vv. 16–17; see Deut. 22:23–24), foreigners in the land (v. 21), widows (vv. 22–24), and the poor (vv. 25–27). God promises to hear the cries of those who are wronged and defend the poor and oppressed.

Witches and wizards were not permitted to live because they were in league with the demonic powers that operated in the godless religions of the nations around Israel. See Lev. 19:31, 20:27 and Deut. 18:9–12. Modern occult practices are an invitation for Satan to go to work and destroy lives.

God also condemned sexual intercourse with animals (see Lev. 20:15–16; Deut. 27:21). Not only were these practices a part of the heathen worship of idols, but they debased human sexuality which is a precious gift from God.

The people were to respect their rulers and refrain from cursing them, even as they would refrain from cursing God. According to Romans 13, the powers that be are ordained of God. If we curse a leader, we are in danger of cursing the God who established the authority of human government.

Verses 29–31 get to the heart of obeying the law: put God first in your life and gladly obey what He says. This is the OT version of Matt. 6:33.

**Toussaint, S. D. (1985). *Acts*. (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Eds.) *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. (Vol. 1, pp. 142–143). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

#### *f. Statutes concerning thieves (22:1–4)*

22:1–4. These regulations deal with the theft of animals. These verses expand on the eighth commandment (20:15). If a person stole and then killed or sold someone's **ox** or **sheep** he must compensate for (**pay back**, *šālēm*, "to repay a legal obligation"; cf. 2 Kings 4:7; Joel 2:25) the

loss by returning the same kinds of animals. Here again was retribution in kind. But **five head of cattle** had to be paid for the loss of one **ox**, and **four sheep** for the loss of one **sheep**. No doubt this heavy compensation effectively deterred animal theft. **If**, however, **the stolen animal** was still **alive**, the remuneration was less but still costly (Ex. 22:4).

**If a thief** burglarized in the night and was killed by the owner of the house, then the defendant was **not guilty of murder**. **But if** the burglar was killed during the daytime the houseowner was guilty of homicide. (Apparently the day thief could be seen and help could more easily be obtained.) The Mosaic code sought to protect human life, even that of criminals. The **thief** was either to compensate for the crime with his own material wealth or to be sold into slavery.

*g. Statutes concerning property damage (22:5–6)*

22:5–6. If the grazing rights of a farmer were violated by another man's **livestock** or **if a fire** destroyed another's crops, the offender had to **make restitution** from his own fields. **Thornbushes** often burned easily and thus helped spread field fires quickly. The Mosaic code strongly affirmed the right to both life and property.

*h. Statutes concerning safe-deposits (22:7–13)*

22:7–13. In the ancient Near East there were no banks, so personal property was sometimes given to a **neighbor** for protection. The one who received someone's valuables (**goods**, clothing, or animals) **for safekeeping** was responsible for them. If personal valuables were lost and no **thief** was **found**, the one who kept the goods had to prove **before the judges** that he did not steal them or he had to make restitution by paying **double** (vv. 7–9). If an **animal** in safekeeping was **injured** or lost, the one taking care of it had to give evidence that he was not negligent or he had **to pay** for the loss (vv. 10–13).

*i. Statutes concerning borrowing (22:14–15)*

22:14–15. When **an animal** was borrowed, the borrower was responsible for its safekeeping. **If the owner** was not present when the animal was **injured** or died, the borrower had to pay for the loss; he was responsible. **But if the owner** was present then **the borrower** was not culpable. If an animal was rented and injury occurred then the owner's compensation was the rent **money**.

*j. Statutes concerning sexual seduction (22:16–17)*

22:16–17. These statutes elaborated the seventh commandment (20:14). Unmarried and unbetrothed daughters in Israel were considered part of their father's property; consequently the loss of a daughter's virginity diminished her value and therefore compensation was due to the father. The seduction of a girl who was betrothed resulted in stoning for both parties (Deut. 22:23–24). If an unengaged **virgin** submitted to seduction **the male was to pay the bride-price** and marry her. Normally the parents of a girl were paid a fee at the time of betrothal which ratified the engagement (cf. Gen. 34:12; 1 Sam. 18:25). **If her father** did not want his daughter to marry the fellow, the man was **still** obligated to **pay** the **bride-money**.

*k. Statutes concerning idolatrous customs (22:18–20)*

22:18–20. The three sins mentioned in these verses merited the death penalty; they anticipated Israel's struggle against the worship of idols. The first deals with female practitioners of sorcery (telling the future or controlling others by demonic power; see comments on Deut. 18:9–12 and on Dan. 2:2); the second is bestiality (cf. Lev. 20:16; Deut. 27:21) which figured prominently in Canaanite Baal worship (cf. Lev. 18:23–24); and the third deals with sacrificing **to any god other than** the true One, **the LORD** (cf. Ex. 20:3–5).

*l. Statutes concerning the care of the needy (22:21–27)*

22:21–27. Various laws for the protection of the underprivileged were included because God cares for them (**I am compassionate**, v. 27). Foreigners were to be treated benevolently because the Israelites themselves had been **aliens in Egypt** (v. 21; cf. 23:9). Also they were **not to take advantage of** people without fathers or husbands because they were already without protection (22:22–24). Mistreatment of them would arouse God's **anger** and the guilty parties would lose their lives.

Grain was to be left behind for widows and orphans during harvest (Deut. 24:19–21) including the edges of fields (Lev. 19:9–10). The helpers were to be given special hospitality at feasts (Deut. 16:11–14), to receive a special tithe every third year (Deut. 14:28–29; 16:12–13), and to be allowed to plant crops in others' fields during the sabbatical year (Ex. 23:11–12).

Also for Israelites in financial need, loans were to be **interest-free** (22:25–27; cf. Lev. 25:35–38; Deut. 15:7–11; 23:19–20). If a loan was made to a poor person, some valuable possession of his, usually a **cloak**, was normally given to the creditor **as a pledge** of repayment. His cloak, however, had to be returned to him **by sunset** to give him comfort at night (cf. Deut. 24:10–13; Job 22:6).

*m. Statutes concerning reverence (22:28–31)*

22:28–31. In the previous verses (vv. 21–27) the needs of people low on the social scale were discussed. This passage (vv. 28–31) deals with rules concerning those higher on the social scale. Neither the name of **God**, the supreme Ruler, nor the name of a human leader was to be cursed. Israel was always to remember that **the firstborn of her sons** and animals belonged to God (cf. 13:2, 12). Sons were to be dedicated to God when they were eight days old and redemption money was to be paid (13:13). The firstborn of the **cattle and sheep** were to be sacrificed.

Animals killed by carnivorous **beasts** were **not** to be eaten by Israel because the blood had not been drained and through it they would have contact, though indirectly, with the unclean animal that killed it. Israel's inward holiness was supposed to be accompanied by her being physically separate from every form of uncleanness.

**Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (pp. 122 – 123). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.**

**22:25** Is it permissible to charge interest on loans? Charging interest was the normal practice in ancient western Asia. In Babylon people were permitted to charge 20 to 50 percent interest on loans of silver bullion or food. The OT also permitted Israelites to charge interest on loans made to non-Israelites (Dt 23:20), though the rate for such loans was not specified. But when it came to lending to fellow Israelites, the Lord's people were to follow a different standard: interest was not to be charged on such loans. It seems that God was teaching His people not to profit from the hardship of their brothers and sisters.

**22:29** For a discussion of whether sons should be given to the Lord or redeemed, see note on 13:12–16.

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